

15 April 1963

**MEMORANDUM FOR The Deputy Secretary of Defense**

**SUBJECT: Operations Aspects of the NRO**

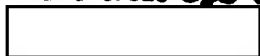
In regard to the operations aspects of the NRO, I believe that some clarification of policy is in order. I also believe that the present organizational arrangements are inadequate with respect to capability for operational planning and analysis, and would like to suggest a solution. *What*

The policy question concerns the definition of denied area overflight, and NRO responsibility during active military hostilities. I am proceeding on the basis that denied area overflights are any overflights of sovereign territory for which specific permission must be obtained from the S412 Special Group or higher authority. As to when the NRO should cease to be responsible for such aircraft overflights, I recommend the policy that this responsibility will be transferred from the Director, NRO to the appropriate military commander upon decision of the Secretary of Defense or higher authority that the area in question has become an active theater of military hostilities.

In regard to the NRO capability for operations planning and analysis, I attach a paper describing a solution which I recommend. I suggest that you discuss this with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**Brookway McMillan**  
**Director**  
**National Reconnaissance Office**

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**Establishment of**  
**NRO Acft Ops Ctr**



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JCS and NRO review(s) completed.



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**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NRO  
AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS CENTER**

1. **PROBLEM:** To define the organizational arrangements whereby the Director, NRO may discharge his assigned responsibilities for aircraft overflight reconnaissance of denied areas.

2. **FACTORS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:**

a. The Director, NRO is responsible\* to the Secretary of Defense for the establishment, management, and conduct of all overflight of denied areas. He is not responsible\*\* for peripheral reconnaissance, except for the responsibility to coordinate the overflight activities of the NRO with peripheral reconnaissance activities.

b. Since the overflight activities of the NRO may involve some commitment of resources presently or potentially assigned in support of Unified and Specified Commands, there should be appropriate coordination of such NRO activities with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

\* DOD-CIA Agreement on NRO, dated 13 March 1963

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\*\* Above Agreement, plus Deputy SecDef memo dated 14 June 1962

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c. In accordance with the intent of the reorganization act of 1958, the Joint Chiefs of Staff should direct the operations of the Unified and Specified Commands, as necessary to support or carry out approved NRO overflight missions, rather than these Commands responding directly to the Director, NRO.

d. In order for the Director, NRO to discharge his assigned responsibilities, it is essential that NRO capability be established to plan, evaluate, and coordinate all aircraft overflights of denied areas. This capability must include highly competent personnel with appropriate operational knowledge and experience. At present, the NRO does not have such capability.

### 2. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

It appears that there are only two basic alternatives, although the details of these could be varied somewhat in regard to method of operation. They are:

a. The establishment, within the NRO, of a new office having this capability, obtaining qualified personnel to staff the office from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and CIA. This office would coordinate appropriate matters with the Joint Chiefs of Staff through the Joint Reconnaissance Center, from which all necessary instructions would be transmitted to Unified and Specified Commands after JCS coordination.

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It is clear that the capability described in alternative "a" must be established unless agreement can be reached to establish the

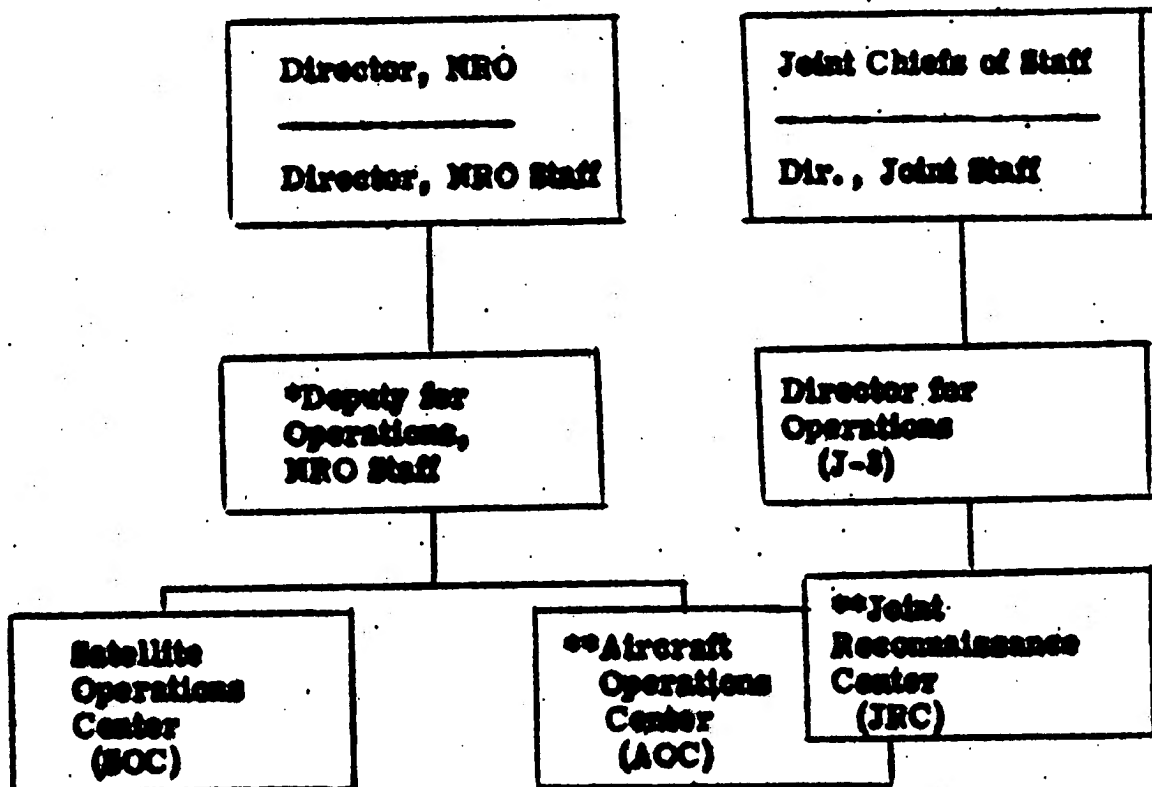
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arrangement described in alternative "b". It would seem that alternative "b" could be established without requiring any increase in the JRC manpower beyond requests currently outstanding. However, alternative "a" would require additional office space and operationally skilled manpower to be transferred to the NRO. Although either alternative undoubtedly could be made to work, the solution of alternative "b" would provide the smoother working interface between the NRO and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and be much more economical in the use of skilled military personnel and critical Pentagon office space. For these reasons, it would seem that alternative "b" is the preferred solution.

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Dual (JCS-NRO) Functions  
of the Joint Reconnaissance  
Center

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**DUAL (JCS-NRO) FUNCTIONS OF THE  
JOINT RECONNAISSANCE CENTER**



♦ Chairman, JRC also serves as Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff.

\*\* JRC and AOC consist of the same personnel and resources: As the JRC, they serve the JCS, and as the AOC, they serve the NRO, in accordance with separately stated functions listed on the following pages.

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**1. JCS Functions (as the JRC of the JCS):**

- a. Review proposed peripheral reconnaissance missions, plans, and programs and transmit to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their consideration those which do not fall within existing guidance, and those which are considered sensitive; i. e., under existing conditions, might seriously affect other U. S. operations and programs.
- b. Keep the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed on all proposed reconnaissance operations of particular interest, the results thereof, and requirements generated thereby. Designated representatives will arrange for special presentations to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other appropriate government officials. Presentations of NRO activities will be in accordance with policy established by the Director, NRO.
- c. Convey decisions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on peripheral reconnaissance matters to commanders and Services concerned.
- d. Convey the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on denied area overflight matters to the Director, NRO.
- e. Maintain liaison with the Secretary of Defense and Director, NSA.
- f. Perform liaison with the National Reconnaissance Office, the Department of State or other government departments and agencies on overflight and peripheral reconnaissance operations to assure that:

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(1) programs or activities proposed by these agencies are considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if appropriate;

(2) the Joint Chiefs of Staff are informed, as required, on such proposed activities and the results thereof; and that,

(3) coordination with unified and specified commands, and other departments and agencies as appropriate, has been carried out.

*All of this could be done by JCS right now if they were told to.*

g. Perform other related duties as directed.

2. NRO Functions (as the Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff, using the personnel and resources of the JAC as the NRO Aircraft Operations Center ((AOC)), and supervising the existing NRO Satellite Operations Center ((SOC)) ):

*From where? CIA*  
a. Receive for the Director, NRO all requirements for overflight reconnaissance of denied areas, analyze these requirements, establish appropriate mission schedules in response thereto, and assign responsibility for preparation of mission plans to appropriate Service elements, unified and specified commands, and/or the CIA in accordance with assigned responsibilities, and in accordance with basic guidance from the Director, NRO.

b. Review all proposed denied-area overflight reconnaissance missions, plans, and programs, obtaining the recommendations of the

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Joint Chiefs of Staff on all those which do not fall within existing guidance, and on those which are considered sensitive and might affect seriously other U. S. operations and programs.

c. Coordinate the overflight activities of the NRO with the peripheral reconnaissance activities of the unified and specified commands.

d. Obtain approval and/or decisions as required, from the Director, NRO and assist him, as required, in the obtaining of appropriate decisions and authorization from higher authority for conduct of overflight reconnaissance missions. Issue appropriate instructions to the Commands, Services and Agencies concerned to insure execution of approved missions.

e. Monitor all NRO reconnaissance missions, keeping the Director, NRO and other designated officials informed of the mission status, progress, and results.

f. Prepare monthly forecast of all NRO missions for submission to the Special Group. Assist the Director, NRO, as required, in the presentation of the National Reconnaissance Program to the Special Group and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

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**g. Maintain NRO liaison with the DIA and the USIB in regard to all requirements for intelligence, mapping and geodesy collection by overflight of denied areas.**

**h. Specify desired targets to be covered by satellite missions, desired on-orbit target program options (to the extent that such options exist within the system capability of individual projects), and make all on-orbit selection between such options, based upon weather or intelligence factors.**

**i. Perform other related duties as directed.**

*Handwritten:* Duplication of existing capabilities. Will not provide any more "gratified or expensive" - to the country, will just add bureaucracy to a present good streamlined management.

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